

The Riddles  
of  
Symphosius







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# The Hundred Riddles of Symphosius



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Translated into English Verse with an  
Introduction and Notes

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*Of this book there have been printed three hundred  
copies at The Elm Tree Press, Woodstock, Vermont*

No.





**Sororculae meae**





## GO, LITTLE BOOK

Martial, *Epigrams*, I, 3

You hope to live in Paternoster Row,  
My little book, when from this desk you go.  
But Lady Fashion's smiles are won by few  
And thrice-armed critics lie in wait for you.

Nowhere more cynic sneers! Both old and young  
Turn up the nose and wag the scornful tongue.  
You'll hear their "Bravos"—then, before you know  
Tossed on a blanket to the stars you'll go!

But that you may escape my anxious pen,  
Changing your lines and changing them again,  
On sportive pinions in the blue you'd be.  
Well, go!—'T were safer here at home with me.





## INTRODUCTION

In these days, a first edition in English of a classical author is a great rarity. An especial interest, therefore, attaches to the *Riddles* of Symphosius, which have now, for the first time, been translated and annotated in our language. It may serve to call the attention of Latin scholars to the wealth of unique and valuable literature which still lies, as it has lain for centuries, practically unknown except to a few German and French *savants*.

The work of Caelius Firmianus Symphosius consists of a Preface and one hundred Riddles, supposed to have been written for a feast at the time of the Saturnalia. Professor A. Reise calls them "clever but easily-guessed riddles". They are certainly clever, with a continuous play upon words and quaint little turns of expression. The fact, too, that Symphosius has very considerably given the answer to each as its title, may have something to do with Professor Reise's criticism that they are "easily guessed". While they do not possess a high degree of poetic merit, they are correct and pleasing in versification, and graceful in diction, with here and there a phrase of considerable beauty: as when the

snow is described as the "slight dust of water" (*pulvis aquae tenuis*); or the rose is called the "purple of earth" (*purpura sum terrae*); or the scourge "teaches obedience by the well-remembered law of pain" (*Obsequium reddens memorata lege doloris*). The ninety-sixth riddle is missing in most of the manuscripts. In one, its place has been supplied by a riddle entitled *De VIII ut tollas VII et remanent VI*, evidently the work of some wiseacre of the Middle Ages. He has, unfortunately, omitted to give the answer. How well Professor Reise has supplied this lack, we leave to the judgment of the reader.

Symphosius' date is very uncertain. A learned Hanoverian, in 1722, even attempted to prove, on the authority of a gloss in one of the manuscripts, that Symphosius did not write the *Riddles* that go under his name, but that they belonged to the *Symposium* of Lactantius. This thesis, however, required too many desperate assumptions to be entertained by scholars. Symphosius is not mentioned by name until the fourth century A. D., and this is generally given as his date. Professor Lucian Müller, however, places him at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century on account of the accuracy of his prosody and metre. This earlier date seems the more probable one for a second reason. There is a striking resemblance in style between the *Riddles* and the New Poetry of Hadrian's time. Both Symphosius and the author of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, for instance, are fond of assonance and of repeated sounds and words, though rhyme itself is not frequent. To give a few illustrations from the *Riddles*:



Exiguum corpus, sed cor mihi corpore maius. (XXXIV. 1);

In terris nascor, lympa labor, ungor olivo, (XLII. 3);

Tres olim fuimus, qui nomine iungimur uno;

Ex tribus est unus, sed tres miscentur in uno, (LXXXII. 1 and 2).

Here, while the repetition is not so skillfully managed as in the golden lines of the *Pervigilium*, it is very far from producing the heavy, pedestrian effect that it does in later Latin poetry.

The *Riddles* appear in numerous early manuscripts, of which the oldest is the *Salmasianus*, belonging to the seventh or eighth century (Paris, 10318). A number of them were added to the *Historia* of Apollonius of Tyre by the Latin translator. Aldhelmus, abbot of Malmesbury in the seventh century, modelled his own book of one hundred riddles very closely on that of Symphosius; and Alcuin used a prose version in teaching Latin to his royal pupil Pepin the Short, son of Charlemagne.

In modern times, however, Symphosius has received but scant attention. The *Riddles* have been published in a number of collections, such as *Poematia Vetera* (Paris, 1590), by Pithoeus (Pierre Pithou), and *Poetae Latini Minores* revised by Baehrens (Leipzig, 1881). Besides a few papers in German philological journals, which have to do almost wholly with the text, there are three small books devoted to Symphosius alone; a doctor's dissertation, *De Symposii Aenigmatibus*, by W. T. Paul (Berlin, 1854), *Das Räthselgedicht des Symposius*, by K. Schenkl (Vienna, 1863), and *Enigmes de Symposius, revues sur plusieurs*

*Manuscripts et traduites en Vers français*, by E. F. Corpet (Paris, 1868).

The one writer who treats Symphosius as a human being and not as a scrub manuscript is, quite naturally, the Frenchman. Professor Corpet's charming translations are in the very spirit of the Latin, smooth, sprightly and witty. One or two of them have a sly fun that is almost better than the original. He uses six short lines, instead of the triple hexameter of Symphosius, and constant rhyme which would, indeed, be a necessity in a modern language. We add a few of the best:—

#### IV Le Clef

J'ai peu de force et grand pouvoir.  
Tour à tour et toujours la même,  
J'ouvre et je ferme tout manoir.  
Je garde au maître ce qu'il aime,  
Son logis, son or, son avoir,  
S'il sait bien me garder lui-même.

#### XVI Le Ver

Je vis des lettres, et j'ignore  
Le premier mot de l' A B C.  
Sans aimer l'étude, j'adore  
Les livres, j'y reste enfoncé,  
Et jour et nuit je les dévore,  
Sans en être plus avancé.



## XVIII Le Colimaçon

Toujours prêt à me mettre en route,  
J'emporte avec moi ma maison.  
Je m'exile, sans qu'il m'en coûte,  
Ici, là, suivant la saison.  
Le ciel m'avertit, je l'écoute :  
Il trompe moins que la raison.

## XXXIV Le Renard

J'ai faible corps et forte tête :  
Rusé compère et fin matois,  
Je suis adroit, pas très-honnête,  
Mais très-intelligent, je crois ;  
Si l'on peut être toutefois  
Intelligent, quand on est bête.

## XCXIX Le Sommeil

Je viens à mon gré : j'offre aux gueux  
Plus d'une image décevante ;  
J'inspire au riche l'épouvante  
Pour des dangers plus que douteux ;  
Nul ne me voit si, dans l'attente,  
Il n'a d'abord fermé les yeux.

Professor Müller concludes an article on the text of Symphosius with a number of riddles which he found in a manuscript of Ausonius at Leyden.

Si me retro legis, potui quae vivere numquam  
Continuo vivam, sumens de nomine vitam.

Si me retro legis, faciam de nomine verbum.  
Femina cum fuerim, imperativus ero.

Si me retro legis, dicam tibi semper id ipsum.  
Una mihi facies ante retroque manet.

Si me retro legis, facere qui vulnera novi,  
Ex me confestim nosis adesse deum.

Some kindly soul has written the answer to the second and the third in the margin and Professor Müller himself ventures a guess for the first and fourth. The answers are ( 1 ) *lamina, animal*; ( 2 ) *Eva, ave*; ( 3 ) *ara*; ( 4 ) *mucro, Orcum*; the last being suggested by the third line of the thirty-sixth riddle of Symphosius. He adds a fifth, from another manuscript, which he does not solve; but leaves to the cleverness and scholarship of the reader. Nor can I do better than follow so illustrious an example.

Quatuor una simul dat dictio nomina rebus.  
Tota namque deum designat voce Latinum.  
Parte sed ablata fit proles Daunia prima.  
Sublato medio remanet contrarius aegro.  
Extremo restat quod prandia cuncta recusat.





## PRAEFATIO

*Annua Saturni dum tempora festa fremebant  
Perpetuo vacuis semper sollemnia ludo,  
Post epulas laetas, post dulcia pocula mensae  
Deliras inter vetulas puerosque loquaces  
Cum streperet late madidae facundia linguae,  
Tum verbosa cohors studio sermonis inepto  
Nescio quas passim magno de nomine nugas  
Est meditata diu; sed frivola multa locuta est.  
Nec mediocre fuit, magni certaminis instar,  
Ponere diverse vel solvere quaeque vicissim.  
Ast ego, ne solus foede tacuisse viderer,  
Qui nihil adtuleram mecum, quod dicere possem,  
Hos versus feci subito e conamine vocis.  
Insanos inter sanum non esse necesse est:  
Da veniam, lector, quod non sapit ebria Musa.*

## PREFACE

When Christmas time rounds out the waning year  
And fills all hearts with merriment and cheer,  
When stuffed with dinner and made gay with wine  
You long amid the loosened tongues to shine ;  
Then loud the mirth, nor is there ever lack  
Of hoary jests, born many seasons back.  
And so the talk goes round from side to side,  
And many jokes are cracked and puns are tried.  
Nor is it bad to wage a war of wits  
And solve a riddle with the word that fits.  
I hate to sit amid a company gay  
And seem as if I'd nothing brought to say,  
So I have made these verses ; you can choose,  
The wise you'll keep, the otherwise refuse ;  
I pray your grace, for who can trust his drunken Muse !

## SYMPHOSII AENIGMATA

### I

*De summo planus, sed non ego planus in imo  
Versor utrimque manu : diverso munere fungor.  
Altera pars revocat, quidquid pars altera fecit.*

### II

*Dulcis amica dei, semper vicina profundis,  
Suave cano Musis, nigro perfusa colore  
Nuntia sum linguae digitis signata ministris.*

### III

*Corporis extremi digito non pondus inhaesi :  
Ingenitum dicas oneratum pondere tali ;  
Una tamen facies plures habitura figuras.*

### IV

*Virtutes magnas de viribus offero parvis :  
Pando domos clausas, iterum sed claudio patentes ;  
Servo domum domino, sed rursus servor ab ipso.*



## THE RIDDLES OF SYMPHOSIUS

### I

Flat is my top, not flat my base at all,  
Both ways I'm turned, nor do my tasks appal,  
What one end does the other can recall.

### II

Companion of a god, the depths I'm always near,  
I to the Muses sing and black appear,  
By min's string fingers pressed, give the tongue's message clear.

### III

Upon the finger my small weight is set  
You scarce would feel my presence there, and yet  
With my one shape, I many forms beget.

### IV

Great deeds with little strength I do,  
I close the open, ope the closed for you.  
I keep the master's house, the master keeps me, too.

## V

*Nexa ligor ferro, multos habitura ligatos;  
Vincior ipsa prius, sed vincio vincta vicissim;  
Et solvi multos, nec sum tamen ipsa soluta.*

## VI

*Glaeba mihi corpus, vires mihi praestitit ignis;  
De terra nascor, sedes est semper in alto;  
Rore ego perfundor, sed me cito deserit umor.*

## VII

*Sunt mihi, sunt lacrimae, sed non est causa doloris.  
Est iter ad caelum, sed me gravis impedit aer;  
Et qui me genuit, sine me non nascitur ipse.*

## VIII

*Nox ego sum facie, sed non sum nigra colore  
Inque die media tenebras tamen affero mecum;  
Nec mihi dant stellae lumen nec Cynthia lucem.*

## IX

*Ex alto venio longa delapsa ruina;  
De caelo cecidi medias si missa per auras,  
Excipit ecce sinus, qui me simul ipse recepit.*

## V

Bound with iron I, and many shall I bind,  
By me, though bound, are more to bonds consigned,  
Many I loose, ne'er loosed myself I find.

## VI

The earth my body, strong through fire am I,  
Though born of earth, my place is still on high,  
And early drenched with dew, I soon am dry.

## VII

The tears I cause, though there's no cause to mourn,  
Still from my upward pathway I am torn,  
And without me, my father ne'er was born.

## VIII

My face is like the night, but not so black in shade,  
And in the midst of day, behold I've darkness made!  
Through me the stars are hid and Cynthia's glories fade.

## IX

I come from heights afar, by headlong ruin spent,  
From heaven I'm despatched, if through the air I'm sent,  
And me the earth receives from whom, at first, I went.



## X

*Unda fui quondam, quod me cito credo futuram.  
Nunc rigidi caeli duris conexa catenis  
Nec calcata pati possum nec nuda teneri.*

## XI

*Pulvis aquae tenuis modico cum pondere lapsus,  
Sole madens, aestate fluens, in frigore siccus,  
Flumina facturus totas prius occupo terras.*

## XII

*Est domus in terris, clara quae voce resultat.  
Ipsa domus resonat, tacitus sed non sonat hospes.  
Ambo tamen currunt, hospes simul et domus una.*

## XIII

*Longa feror velox formosae filia silvae,  
Innumera pariter comitum stipante caterva,  
Curro vias multas, vestigia nulla relinquens.*

## XIV

*Mira tibi referam nostrae primordia vitae:  
Nondum natus eram, nec eram iam matris in alvo;  
Iam posito partu natum me nemo videbat.*

X

Wave I was and wave again will be  
Though now by heaven's chain held rigidly ;  
So without gloves beware of handling me.

XI

Dust of the water, light of weight am I ;  
I'm dripping in the sun, but in the cold am dry,  
I rivers make, though first upon the ground I lie.

XII

A house there is which rings throughout the land with song,  
The house itself doth sing, the guests in silence throng,  
Yet both the house and guests together move along.

XIII

Child of the forest, swift and full of grace  
And countless comrades move with equal pace ;  
O'er many roads I pass, nor leave behind a trace.

XIV

I tell again life's wondrous story old ;  
Not born, nor did my mother me enfold,  
And then, though born, no eye could me behold.

## XV

*Non possum nasci, si non occidero matrem.  
Occidi matrem, sed me manet exitus idem:  
Id mea mors patitur, mea quod iam fecit origo.*

## XVI

*Littera me pavit nec quid sit littera novi:  
In libris vixi nec sum studiosior inde;  
Exedi Musas nec adhuc tamen ipsa profeci.*

## XVII

*Pallas me docuit texendi nosse laborem:  
Nec telam radii poscunt nec licia telae;  
Nulla mihi manus est, pedibus tantum omnia fiunt.*

## XVIII

*Porto domum mecum, semper migrare parata,  
Mutatoque solo non sum miserabilis exul,  
Sed mihi concilium de caelo nascitur ipso.*

## XIX

*Rauca sonans ego sum media vocalis in unda,  
Sed vox laude vacat, quasi se quoque laudet et ipsa;  
Cumque canam semper, nullus mea carmina laudat.*



XV

To live at all, my mother I must kill:  
I killed my mother—her lot waits me still,  
So death and birth one destiny fulfill.

XVI

I thrive on letters yet no letters know,  
I live in books, not made more studious so,  
Devour the Muses, but no wiser grow.

XVII

To weave my web, Pallas herself hath taught,  
No shuttle hath my web, no threads are caught,  
And with my feet are all its wonders wrought.

XVIII

My house I bear with me, and so away I steal,  
Ready to change my land, nor dreary exile feel,  
Yet heaven itself to me great wisdom doth reveal.

XIX

Sonorous rings my voice above the tide.  
Why should I seek its melody to hide?  
And so I sing, though none my song abide.

## XX

*Tarda, gradu lento, specioso praedita dorso;  
Docta quidem studio, sed duro prodita fato  
Viva nihil dixi, quae sic modo mortua canto.*

## XXI

*Caeca mihi facies atris obscura tenebris;  
Nox est ipse dies nec sol mihi cernitur ullus;  
Malo tegi terra: sic me quoque nemo videbit.*

## XXII

*Provida sum vitae, duro non pigra labore,  
Ipsa ferens umeris securae praemia brumae;  
Nec gero magna simul, sed congero cuncta vicissim.*

## XXIII

*Inproba sum, fateor: quid enim gula turpe veretur?  
Frigora vitabam, quae nunc aestate revertor;  
Sed cito submoveor falso conterrita vento.*

## XXIV

*Non bonus agricolis nec frugibus utilis hospes  
Nec magnus forma nec recto nomine dictus  
Nec gratus Cereri de multa vivo sagina.*

XX

My gait is slow, though splendidly I'm dressed,  
And learnèd, though by envious fate oppressed,  
Alive I nothing say, but dead, my voice is blessed.

XXI

Blinded my eyes, for I in darkness grow,  
And night is day, the sun I do not know,  
I like it in the ground, no one can find me so.

XXII

Most provident am I, in toil delight,  
My food I store against the winter's blight,  
Not all at once, I bring it mite by mite.

XXIII

My sins I own, for what have I to fear?  
I shunned the cold, but with the heat I'm here.  
Though quickly driven off when fickle winds appear.

XXIV

To farmers and their crops no useful guest,  
Though small, they think me still a mighty pest.  
And Ceres loves me not, I eat with too much zest.



## XXV

*Parva mihi domus est, sed ianua semper aperta ;  
Exiguo sumptu furtiva vivo rapina ;  
Quod mihi nomen inest, Romae quoque consul habebat.*

## XXVI

*Littera sum caeli penna perscripta volanti,  
Bella cruenta gerens volucris discrimine Martis ;  
Nec vereor pugnare, dum non sit longior hostis.*

## XXVII

*Vivo novem vitas, si me non Graecia fallit,  
Atraque sum semper nullo compulsus dolore,  
Et non irascens ultro convitia dico.*

## XXVIII

*Nox mihi dat nomen primo de tempore noctis ;  
Pluma mihi non est, cum sit mihi pinna volantis ;  
Sed resto in tenebris nec me committo diebus.*

## XXIX

*Plena domus spinis, parvi sed corporis hospes ;  
Incolumi dorso telis confixus acutis  
Sustinet armatas sedes habitator inermis.*

XXV

My house is small, but open wide the door,  
I get by thieving all my slender store.  
My name a Roman consul proudly bore.

XXVI

A flying letter writ upon the sky  
And harbinger of bloody wars am I;  
Nor fear with equal foes my strength to try.

XXVII

Nine lives have I, if Greece does not deceive;  
I'm clad in black, but not because I grieve,  
Though angered not, I curse, for curses I conceive.

XXVIII

From night my name, the early hours of night.  
No plumage have I, yet I've wings for flight,  
I stay in darkness, for I dread the light.

XXIX

A prickly house a little host contains;  
The pointed weapons keep his back from pains,  
So he, unarmed, safe in his fort remains.

## XXX

*Est nova notarum cunctis captura ferarum,  
Ut, si qui capias, et tu tibi ferre recuses  
Et, si non capias, tecum tamen ipse reportes.*

## XXXI

*Vita mihi mors est; morior si coepero nasci;  
Sed prius est fatum leti quam lucis origo,  
Sic solus Manes ipsos mihi dico parentes.*

## XXXII

*Moechus eram regis, sed lignea membra sequebar;  
Et Cilicum mons sum, sed mons sum nomine multo;  
Et vehor in caelis et in ipsis ambulo terris.*

## XXXIII

*Dentibus insanis ego sum, quis trunco bidentes,  
Sanguineas praedas quaerens victusque cruentos;  
Multaque in rabie vocem quoque tollere possum.*

## XXXIV

*Exiguum corpus, sed cor mihi corpore maius;  
Sum versuta dolis, arguto callida sensu;  
Et fera sum sapiens, sapiens fera si qua vocatur.*



XXX

There is a little beast, to all he's known,  
Whom, if you catch, you'll hesitate to own  
And, if you catch him not, to come along he's prone.

XXXI

My life is death, for life and death are one,  
Destruction first and then new light begun,  
My parents are the Manes, I alone their son.

XXXII

A tyrant's sport, though wooden members led,  
My name to many mountains I have spread,  
I ride the heavens yet on earth I tread.

XXXIII

With raging teeth I mangle what I slay,  
And gory victims seek and blood-stained prey,  
And in my madness many things I say.

XXXIV

My bravery exceeds my body's size,  
An adept in deceit and skilled in lies,  
A wise beast I, if any beast is wise.

## XXXV

*Alma Iovis nutrix, longo vestita capillo,  
Culmina de facili peragrans super ardua gressu,  
Custodi pecoris tremula respondeo lingua.*

## XXXVI

*Setigeræ matris fecunda pastus in alvo  
Desuper ex alto virides expecto saginas,  
Nomine numen habens, si littera prima peribit.*

## XXXVII

*Dissimilis matri, patri diversa figura,  
Confusi generis, generi non apta propago,  
Ex aliis nascor nec quidquam nascitur ex me.*

## XXXVIII

*A fluvio dicor, fluvius vel dicitur ex me;  
Iunctaque sum vento, quo sum velocior ipso;  
Et mihi dat ventus natos nec quaero maritum.*

## XXXIX

*Quattuor insignis pedibus manibusque duabus  
Dissimilis mihi sum, quia sum non unus et unum;  
Et vehor et gradior: duo me mea corpora portant.*

XXXV

Jove's tender nurse, and clad in lengthy hair,  
My easy steps the highest mountains dare,  
With trembling voice I own the shepherd's care.

XXXVI

A bristly mother gave me birth, they say,  
And now above my verdant food I stay,  
My name, too, is a god's, with the first sound away.

XXXVII

My form with neither parent's doth agree  
Of mingled race not fit for progeny,  
And though of others born, there's born no son of me.

XXXVIII

I bear a river's name or else my name bears he,  
United to the winds, I can more swiftly flee;  
The wind, too, gives me sons, no other mate for me.

XXXIX

Four stunning feet I have and hands a pair,  
Unlike myself, not one and one I fare,  
I ride and walk at once, for me two bodies bear.



## XL

*Grande mihi caput est, intus sunt membra minuta ;  
Pes solum est unus, sed pes longissimus unus ;  
Et me somnus amat, proprio nec dormio somno.*

## XLI

*Anseris esse pedes similis mihi, nolo negare ;  
Nec duo sunt tantum, sed plures ordine cernis ;  
Et tamen hos ipsos omnes ego porto supinos.*

## XLII

*Tota vocor graece, sed non sum tota latine.  
Pauperibus semper proponor praeque tabernis  
In terris nascor, lympa labor, ungor olivo.*

## XLIII

*Pendeo, dum nascor ; rursus, dum pendeo, cresco ;  
Pendens commoveor ventis et nutrior auris ;  
Pendula si non sim, non sum iam magna futura.*

## XLIV

*Mordeo mordentes, ultro non mordeo quemquam ;  
Sed sunt mordentum multi mordere parati :  
Nemo timet morsum, dentes quia non habeo ullos.*

XL

Large is my head, within the parts are small,  
One foot have I, but that is monstrous tall,  
And sleep I give, though I sleep not at all.

XLI

The gander's foot is like me, I agree,  
And yet not two but many here you see,  
All laid out flat, I carry them with me.

XLII

Not wholly Latin, though I'm wholly Greek,  
And me, in little shops, the humble seek ;  
Born in the ground, with water washed, of oil I reek.

XLIII

Hanging, I'm born, again, while hanging, grow ;  
Hanging I'm stirred by winds and nourished so ;  
Hung, if I'm not, no future great, I'll know.

XLIV

I bite the biters, no one else in sight ;  
To bite me, biting, most are ready, quite,  
No teeth have I, so they fear not my bite.

## XLV

*Purpura sum terrae pulcro perfusa colore,  
Saeptaque, ne violer, telis defendor acutis;  
O felix, longo si possim vivere fato!*

## XLVI

*Magna quidem non sum, sed inest mihi maxima virtus :  
Spiritus est magnus, quamvis sim corpore parvo ;  
Nec mihi tegmen habet noxam nec culpa ruborem.*

## XLVII

*Dulcis odor nemoris flamma fumoque fatigor,  
Et placet hoc superis, medios quod mittor in ignes,  
Cum mihi peccandi meritum natura negavit.*

## XLVIII

*De lacrimis et pro lacrimis mea coepit origo :  
Ex oculis fluxi, sed nunc ex arbore nascor ;  
Laetus honor frondi, tristis sed imago doloris.*

## XLIX

*Dens ego sum magnus populis cognatus Eois,  
Nunc ego per partes in corpora multa recessi ;  
Nec remanent vires, sed formae gratia mansit.*

XLV

Crimson of earth, a splendid colour dyed,  
Take care! Behind a prickly hedge I hide,  
O happy, could I longer here abide!

XLVI

Not great, the greatest virtue I possess,  
And sweet my breath, though smallness I confess,  
I neither wound the hand nor bring the heart distress.

XLVII

Sweet odour of the grove, with flame and vapour weighed,  
The gods are pleased with this, that I 'mid fires be laid,  
Nor may I sin, for me my nature so hath made.

XLVIII

From tears, for tears I first was made to grow,  
Once from the eyes, but now from trees I flow;  
Glad honour to my leaf, but 'tis the form of woe!

XLIX

A mighty tooth am I, 'neath Eastern skies.  
Through other lands, in many shapes I rise,  
No strength remains, but still my charms they prize.



## L

*Herba fui quondam viridis de gramine terrae ;  
Sed chalybis duro mollis praecisa metallo  
Mole premor propria, tecto conclusa sub alto.*

## LI

*Ambo sumus lapides, una sumus, ambo iacemus ;  
Quam piger est unus, tam non est et piger alter ;  
Hic manet immotus, non desinit ille moveri.*

## LII

*Inter saxa fui, quae me contrita premebant,  
Vix tamen effugi totis conlisa medullis ;  
Et iam forma mihi minor est, sed copia maior.*

## LIII

*Nolo toro iungi, quamvis placet esse maritam ;  
Nolo virum thalamo : per me mea nata propago est ;  
Nolo sepulcra pati : scio me submergere terrae.*

## LIV

*Exiguum corpus, munus mucronis adunci,  
Fallacis escas medio circumfero fluctu ;  
Blandior, ut noceam ; morti praemitto saginas.*

## L

An herb was I, within a grassy glade,  
When soft, laid low beneath an iron blade,  
And then aloft with many kindred laid.

## LI

Though twain, I'm one, two stones together lie,  
And one's as lazy as the other's spry,  
One moveth not, the other up and down doth ply.

## LII

All crushed was I between the stones before,  
So sorely pounded scarce I out could pour,  
And now my size is less, but my abundance more.

## LIII

No couch for me, I care not to be bound,  
No bed for me, yet are my daughters found,  
No grave for me, although I love the ground.

## LIV

My form is small, the crooked dagger's pride,  
With treacherous lures, throughout the stream I hide;  
I charm to hurt, and then my food to death confide.

## LV

*Longa sed exilis, tenui producta metallo,  
Mollia duco levi comitantia vincula ferro,  
Et faciem laesis et nexum reddo solutis.*

## LVI

*Maior eram longe quondam, dum vita manebat;  
At nunc exanimis lacerata ligata revolsa  
Dedita sum terrae, tumulo sed condita non sum.*

## LVII

*In caput ingredior, quia de pede pendeo solo:  
Vertice tango solum, capitis vestigia signo;  
Sed multi comites casum patiuntur eundem.*

## LVIII

*Findere me nulli possunt, praecidere multi;  
Sed diversicolor sum albus quandoque futurus;  
Malo manere niger: minus ultima fata verebor.*

## LIX

*Non sum compta comis et non sum calva capillis;  
Intus enim crines mihi sunt, quos non videt ullus;  
Meque manus mittunt manibusque remittor in auras.*

LV

Long and thin am I, of metal slight,  
My yielding chain I draw by iron light,  
I shape the torn and bind the loosened tight.

LVI

Much larger was I once and ran around,  
Now lifeless, mangled, torn away and bound,  
To earth devoted, but not buried in the ground.

LVII

Hung from my foot upon my head I go,  
And on the ground I leave my head-prints so,  
But my misfortunes many comrades know.

LVIII

No one can split, though many sunder me,  
I'm various colors now, but white shall be,  
And black I'd stay, the less my fate to see.

LIX

Nor combed my locks nor yet of tresses bare,  
Within, where no one sees, my curls I wear;  
Hands send and hands return me through the air.



## LX

*Dentibus innumeris sum toto corpore plena,  
Frondicomas suboles morsu depascor acuto,  
Mando tamen frustra, quod respuo praemia dentis.*

## LXI

*Mucro mihi geminus ferro coniungitur uno;  
Cum vento luctor, cum gurgite pugno profundo;  
Scrutor aquas medias, ipsas quoque mordeo terras.*

## LXII

*Stat domus in lymphis, stat in alto gurgite silva  
Et manet in mediis undis immobile robur;  
Terra tamen mittit, quod terrae munera praestat.*

## LXIII

*Ipsa gravis non sum, sed aqua mihi pondus inhaeret;  
Viscera tota tument patulis diffusa cavernis;  
Intus lymphæ latet, sed non se sponte profundit.*

## LXIV

*Tres mihi sunt dentes, unus quos continet ordo;  
Unus praeterea dens est et solus in imo;  
Meque tenet numen, ventus timet, aequora curant.*

LX

By countless teeth is all my body lined,  
The forest's sons I fell with bite unkind,  
And yet in vain I eat, I throw it all behind.

LXI

My double points in one by iron bound,  
With winds I struggle, fight with gulfs profound,  
I search the waters and I bite the ground.

LXII

A house on water stands, a wood stands in the stream,  
And 'mid the rolling waves abides an oaken beam,  
Yet earth sends all the gifts with which her coffers teem.

LXIII

Not heavy, I, with water, weighty grow,  
Diffused through all my yawning caves 'twill go,  
Nor of its own accord will outward flow.

LXIV

Three teeth have I, all standing in a row,  
And still another tooth, alone, below ;  
A god possesses me, winds fear and waters know.

## LXV

*Saepta gravi ferro, levibus circumdata pinnis  
Aera per medium volucris contendo meatu,  
Missaque descendens nullo mittente revertor.*

## LXVI

*De pecudis dorso pecudes ego terreo cunctas,  
Obsequium reddens memorata lege doloris;  
Nec volo contemni sed contra nolo nocere.*

## LXVII

*Cornibus apta cavis, tereti perlucida gyro,  
Lumen habens intus, divini sideris instar,  
Noctibus in mediis faciem non perdo dierum.*

## LXVIII

*Perspicior penitus nec luminis arceo visus,  
Transmittens oculos ultra mea membra meantes;  
Nec me transit hiems, sed sol tamen emicat in me.*

## LXIX

*Nulla mihi certa est, nulla est peregrina figura;  
Fulgor inest intus radiantis luce coruscus,  
Qui nihil ostendit, nisi quidquid viderit ante.*

LXV

With heavy iron bound and feathers light,  
Through middle air I hold my rapid flight,  
Sent upward I return without a sender's might.

LXVI

From cattle's backs, of cattle's backs the bane,  
I teach obedience by the law of pain,  
I'll not be scorned, nor yet to hurt am fain.

LXVII

In hollow horn I from my circle shine,  
My light's within, most like a star divine,  
At midnight, still, the face of day is mine.

LXVIII

Look deep within, I hinder not the light  
Beyond my members, I let pass the sight  
But not the cold, for here the sun is bright.

LXIX

No shape is strange to me, yet none I know,  
My glories with an inner radiance glow,  
Which, till they're seen before, can nothing show.



## LXX

*Lex bona dicendi, lex sum quoque dura tacendi,  
Ius avidae linguae, finis sine fine loquendi,  
Ipsa fluens, dum verba fluunt, ut lingua quiescat.*

## LXXI

*Mersa procul terris in cespite lympa profundo  
Non nisi perfossis possum procedere venis,  
Labor et ad superos alieno ducta labore.*

## LXXII

*Truncum terra tegit, latitant in cespite lymphae;  
Alveus est modicus, qui ripas non habet ullas;  
In ligno medio vehitur, quae ligna vehebat.*

## LXXIII

*Non ego continuo morior, dum spiritus exit;  
Nam redit adsidue, quamvis et saepe recedit:  
Nunc mihi sic magna est animae, nunc nulla facultas.*

## LXXIV

*Deucalion ego sum crudeli sospes ab unda,  
Affinis terrae, sed longe durior illa;  
Littera decedat: volucris quoque nomen habebo.*

LXX

Hard rule of silence I, good rule of speech,  
To words that know no end, an end I teach,  
I flow as well as they, that rest the tongue may reach.

LXXI

Deep water that a sunken clod sustains,  
Go forth I cannot, save through piercéd veins,  
And painfully I rise, led by another's pains.

LXXII

The earth my body covers, streams in sod abide,  
Confined my bed, nor has it banks upon the side,  
And that which wood hath ridden, now in wood doth ride.

LXXIII

My spirit gone, not quickly dead am I,  
It goeth forth but cometh by and by,  
And now I nothing have, and now my spirit's high.

LXXIV

Deucalion am I, from cruel waves set free,  
And like the earth, but harder far than she,  
Leave off a letter, then a flying thing I'll be.

## LXXV

*Evasi flammās, ignis tormenta profugi:  
Ipsa medella meo pugnat contraria fato;  
Infundor lymphis: gelidis incendor ab undis.*

## LXXVI

*Virtus magna mihi: durus mollior ab igni,  
Cessantique foco fomes mihi vivus adhaeret:  
Semper inest in me, sed raro cernitur ignis.*

## LXXVII

*Quattuor aequales currunt ex arte sorores  
Sic quasi certantes, cum sit labor omnibus unus;  
Et prope sunt pariter nec se contingere possunt.*

## LXXVIII

*Nos sumus, ad caelum quae scandimus alta petentes,  
Concordi fabrica quas unus continet ordo,  
Ut simul haerentes per nos nitantur ad auras.*

## LXXIX

*Mundi magna parens, laqueo conexa tenaci,  
Vincta solo plano, manibus compressa duabus  
Ducor ubique sequens et me quoque cuncta sequuntur.*

## LXXV

Escaped from fire, I its torments spurn :  
Myself the cure, against my fate I turn,  
I'm drenched with water, then with icy streams I burn.

## LXXVI

Great virtue have I, hard, by fire made soft,  
The fire, dead, I coax once more aloft,  
For fire in me abides, though not discernèd oft.

## LXXVII

Four equal sisters and they run with skill  
As if they vied, one labour they fulfill,  
Though near they never touch, but keep their distance still.

## LXXVIII

We're those who climb to heaven, scale the heights,  
A simple structure which one bond unites.  
So he who clings to us, through us on high alights.

## LXXIX

Mother of cleanness, and most firmly bound,  
In two hands wielded on a level ground.  
I'm led, pursuing, all pursue me round.



## LXXX

*Aere rigens curvo patulos conponor in orbes ;  
Mobilis est intus linguae crepitantis imago ;  
Non resono positus, motus longeque resulto.*

## LXXXI

*Mater erat Tellus, genitor est ipse Prometheus ;  
Auriculaeque regunt geminatae ventre cavato ;  
Dum misere cecidi, divisit me mea mater.*

## LXXXII

*Tres olim fuimus, qui nomine iungimur uno ;  
Ex tribus est unus, sed tres miscentur in uno ;  
Quisque bonus per se : melior, qui continet omnes.*

## LXXXIII

*Sublatum nihil est, nihil est extrinsecus auctum ;  
Nec tamen invenio, quicquid prius ipse reliqui :  
Quod fueram, non sum ; coepit, quod non erat, esse.*

## LXXXIV

*Nomen habens Graecum, contentio magna dearum  
Fraus iuvenis pulcri, iunctarum cura sororum  
Excidio Troiae vel bella cruenta peregi.*

## LXXX

I'm stiff with curvèd brass and spread around,  
Within, an image of the tongue is found,  
Set down, I speak not, but, when moved, resound.

## LXXXI

From Earth and Fire I my being gain,  
My double ears and hollow belly reign,  
Me, when I fell, my mother broke in twain.

## LXXXII

We once were three, who, in their name are one,  
One is from three, yet three are mixed in one,  
And each is good itself, but better all in one.

## LXXXIII

Naught is subtracted, nor is added more,  
I nothing find which I had lost before,  
Yet I begin to be what I was not of yore.

## LXXXIV

My name is Greek, for me great beauties vied,  
A fair youth's fraud, with sisters I abide,  
Through me was vanquished mighty Ilion's pride.

## LXXXV

*Nobile duco genus magni de gente Catonis;  
Una mihi soror est, plures licet esse putentur;  
De fumo facies, sapor et mihi salsus inhaesit.*

## LXXXVI

*Non ego de toto mihi corpore vindico vires,  
Sed capitis pugna nulli certare recuso:  
Grande mihi caput est, totum quoque pondus in illo.*

## LXXXVII

*Contero cuncta simul virtutis robore magno;  
Una mihi cervix, caput sed forma duorum;  
Pro pedibus caput est: nam cetera corpore non sunt.*

## LXXXVIII

*Cuprea curva capax, alienis humida guttis,  
Luminibus falsis auri mentita colorem,  
Dedita sudori, modico subcumbo labori.*

## LXXXIX

*Per totas aedes innoxius introit ignis;  
Est calor in medio magnus, quem nemo veretur;  
Non est nuda domus, sed nudus convenit hospes.*

LXXXV

Of noble race I come, great Cato's line,  
I have one sister, more are reckoned mine,  
From smoke my looks are caught, I taste of brine.

LXXXVI

My strength resides not in my total frame,  
But with my head to fight, I'm always game,  
My head is great, no other weight I claim.

LXXXVII

With oaken might, all things at once I grind,  
Two heads upon a single neck I bind,  
For feet I use my head, no other parts you'll find.

LXXXVIII

I'm made of brass, with foreign drops I'm wet  
And for my golden gleam much praise I get,  
A little work will cover me with sweat.

LXXXIX

Through all the house doth harmless fire appear,  
'Tis close at hand yet none show any fear,  
Not nude the house but nude the guest is here.



## XC

*Dedita sum semper voto, non certa futuri;  
Iactor in ancipitis varia vertigine casus;  
Nunc ego maesta malis, nunc rebus laeta secundis.*

## XCI

*Terra fui primo, latebris abscondita duris;  
Nunc aliud pretium flammae nomenque dederunt,  
Nec iam terra vocor, licet ex me terra paretur.*

## XCII

*Plus ego sustinui quam corpus debuit unum;  
Tres animas habui, quas omnes intus alebam;  
Abscessere duae, sed tertia paene peregit.*

## XCIII

*Bellipotens olim, semper metuendus in armis,  
Sexque pedes habui, quos numquam nemo negavit;  
Nunc mihi vix duo sunt: inopem me copia reddit.*

## XCIV

*Cernere iam fas est, quod vix tibi credere fas est;  
Unus inest oculus, capitum sed milia multa;  
Quidquid habet vendit, quod non habet unde parabit?*

XC

To chance I'm sacred, nor the future know ;  
And, tossed on doubtful falls with varied throw,  
Now joy and now misfortune I bestow.

XCI

Earth was I at first, 'twixt rugged boulders caught,  
Now fire another name and price has taught,  
And earth no more I'm called, yet with me earth is bought.

XCII

More have I carried than from one was due ;  
Three lives I had and all I nourished too ;  
Now two are gone, the third came hardly through.

XCIII

Once all were awe-struck by my martial pride,  
Six feet had I, which no one e'er denied,  
Now scarce I've two, for wealth does not abide.

XCIV

Now may you see, though not believe, I fear,  
One eye and many thousand heads are here,  
Whate'er he has, he sells. Whence comes what don't  
appear?

## XCV

*Inter luciferum caelum terrasque iacentes  
Aera per medium docta meat arte viator ;  
Semita sed brevis est, pedibus nec sufficit ipsis.*

## XCVI

\* \* \* \* \*

## XCVII

*Insidias nullas vereor de fraude latentis ;  
Nam deus attribuit nobis haec munera formae,  
Quod me nemo movet, nisi qui prius ipse movetur.*

## XCVIII

*Virgo modesta nimis legem bene servo pudoris :  
Ore procax non sum nec sum temeraria linguae ;  
Ultro nolo loqui, sed do responsa loquenti.*

## XCIX

*Sponte mea veniens varias ostendo figuras ;  
Fingo metus vanos nullo discrimine veri ;  
Sed me nemo videt, nisi qui sua lumina claudit.*

## XCV

Amid the starry skies, with earth below,  
On high the skillful traveler can go ;  
The road is short nor doth a foot-hold show.

## XCVI

\* \* \* \* \*

## XCVII

By snares, by lurking fraud I'm undeterred,  
For god on me these gifts of form conferred,  
That me no one can stir till he himself has stirred.

## XCVIII

A modest maid am I, yet not, perhaps, too meek;  
No impudence I own, nor indiscretion seek,  
Naught of myself I say, but answer those that speak.

## XCIX

Unbidden do I come, in varied guise,  
Without the truth, I empty dreams devise,  
And me no mortal sees unless he shuts his eyes.



## C

*Nomen habens hominis post ultima fata relinquo ;  
Nomen inane manet, sed dulcis vita profugit ;  
Vita tamen superest meritis post tempora vilae.*

C

A mortal's name I hold when he is dead,  
Remains the empty name, though life has fled,  
Yet for the good there is an after-life instead.



## NOTES AND ANSWERS

*Preface.* In some of the manuscripts, the *Praefatio* begins with the two lines :

Haec quoque Symphosius de carmine lusit inepto  
Sic tu, Sexte, doces ; sic te deliro magistro.

It may be that Symphosius himself rejected these lines on revising his books, as Reise thinks ; or, more probably, they are the work of some Mediaeval copyist. They add nothing to the meaning and throw the number of lines in the *Preface* out of harmony with the threes of the Riddles.

*Saturni.* The feast of Saturn was originally confined to a single day, December 19. Under the Empire, however, it was extended to seven days, beginning December 17. During the *Saturnalia* it was unlawful to transact business of any kind, and so the courts, the shops and the schools were all closed. Even the slaves were allowed unusual privileges. They did no work, went about, like everybody else, in the "liberty cap", and spoke their minds with the utmost freedom. The crowds in the streets shouted *Io Saturnalia* as we do "Merry Christmas". They carried wax tapers and dressed in loose gowns and liberty caps, all of which suggests the later Christmas masqueraders. Friends gave each other presents, and, finally, at private merry-makings, a mock king was elected, calling to mind the characteristic ceremony of Twelfth Night.



The Romans always showed the keenest interest in dining. Besides many chance allusions, Horace has devoted three *Satires* to this subject. The second *Satire* of the first book is in praise of a simple diet, the fourth of the same book contains Catius' maxims on cookery, and the eighth of the second book is an amusing description of a parvenu's dinner-party. With this last may be compared *Trimalchio's Dinner*, the longest extant fragment of Petronius' *Satires*. It has been charmingly translated by Professor Harry Thurston Peck (New York, 1908). Here a vulgar but, on the whole, a very likable old freedman entertains his friends at an elaborate banquet, tells the story of his life, and finally enacts his own funeral. The book is invaluable for the light it throws not only on the language, but also on the manners and customs of provincials of the lower class. Trimalchio's cook adds to the merriment of the guests by punning descriptions of the various dishes in one course. Martial in the thirteenth and fourteenth books of the *Epigrams*, does somewhat the same thing. These books consist of couplets intended to go with dinner favours, both those served at table and those carried home by the guests. The following went with the gift of a pig, which was a highly prized food among the Romans, and belonged, especially, to the Saturnalia, as turkey does to our own Christmas dinner:

" This pig a Merry Christmas brings to you,  
That, 'mid the foaming boars, on acorns grew."

With the later emperors, dining was the great business of life. Juvenal tells (*Satire IV*) of a huge rhombus that was

presented to Domitian. No dish in the palace-kitchen was large enough to cook it. So a State Council was hurriedly called and, after much discussion, finally hit upon a plan by which the fish might be served whole. Again in the fifth *Satire*, Juvenal describes a dinner to which sea and forest have contributed their choicest treasures. But the fine bread, the mushrooms, the lobster, the boar, the rhombus, the goose's liver and all the rest of the good things are placed in front of the master, while the poor client, at the other end of the table, has to be content with cabbage, oil fit only for the lamps, and a crab garnished with half an egg.

So, too, Persius (*Satire III*) gives a terribly vivid picture of the glutton—no uncommon thing among the Romans, as may well be supposed: "He goes to his bath, his stomach distended with eating, pale, and with a sulphurous vapour slowly oozing from his throat. But a shivering comes on over the wine, and makes him drop the hot tumbler from his fingers. His teeth are exposed and chatter; the rich dainties come up again from his dropping jaws. The result of it all is horn-blowing and tapers; and at last the deceased, laid out on a high bed and smeared with coarse ointment, turns up his toes stark and stiff towards the door; and citizens of twenty-four hours' standing, in their liberty caps, carry him to the grave."

Macrobius in the *Saturnalia*, Aulus Gellius in the *Noctes Atticae*, and many others discuss this most important subject of dining. To them the reader is referred for all sorts of curious details, but it may not be out of place to describe here, very briefly, the order of a Roman dinner.



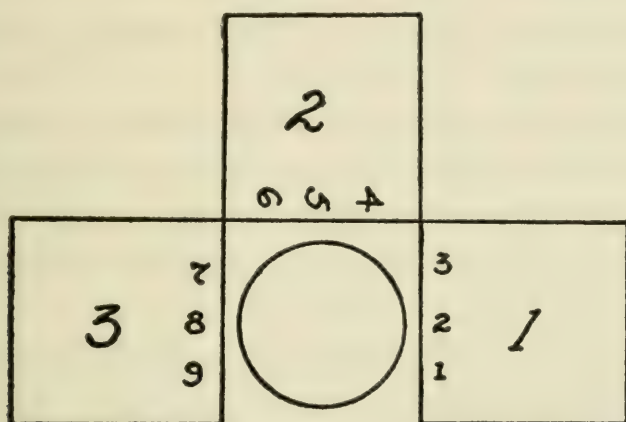
It usually began about three o'clock in the afternoon and lasted until well on into the evening. Even Pliny, the Elder, who scarcely stopped writing to sleep, sat three hours over his dinner. An ordinary dinner consisted of three parts. First came the *hors d'oeuvres*, oysters, vegetables with savoury sauces, olives, mushrooms, and eggs. After this was the dinner proper, which in simple families constituted the whole meal. There were three courses; and at elaborate banquets, many more, although Augustus restricted the number to six. The boar was sure to appear, that *animal propter convivium natum*, as Juvenal says. There were apt to be several different kinds of fish, which came next to the boar in the estimation of the Romans: as turbot, mullet, murena and, perhaps, a lobster dressed with asparagus. Last, there were fowls — ducks, capons, pheasants, peacocks. According to a popular song, one ambitious epicure even went so far as to include the stork in his bill of fare:

" This Rufus served the stork upon his board,  
His reputation as a swell was made.  
But when he ran for office, Fashion's lord  
Got barely seven votes——the storks were paid!"

After the dinner proper came the dessert, consisting of all sorts of pastry and fresh and dried fruits. With the *hors d'oeuvres*, wine mixed with honey was served, and wine mixed with water throughout the dinner. The usual proportion was one third wine and two thirds water. Half wine and half water was considered rather a strong order, and unmixed wine, *merum*, was a carouse.

After each course water was brought to wash the hands,

for it must be remembered that the Romans ate largely with their fingers. The different courses were artfully arranged on large wooden or silver trays. This was the work of the



Roman Dining Table and Couches

*structor*, a very highly paid slave. The tray was placed on the table, around three sides of which the guests reclined, and the meats carved by the *scissor*, often to the sound of music. The accompanying diagram shows the usual arrangement of the table and couches. Three persons occupied each couch, sometimes four, so placed that their right arms were nearest the table while they ate, which they did lying almost flat upon their breasts. When a guest had finished he reclined on his left elbow and was ready for conversation. The middle table (marked 2) was considered the most honourable, as was the middle place on each couch, although the upper places (1, 4, 7) were preferable to the lower (3, 6, 9). So 9 was the worst place at the table and was



often occupied by a " poor relation " or some uninvited guest who had been brought along to make up the desired nine. The host was usually at 7, so that he could go out more easily in case of an urgent message. For the same reason, if a consul, or other public officer, were among the guests, he was placed at 6.

The Romans knew nothing of after-dinner speeches ; but, during the dinner, poetry was read aloud, often the host's own verses, or there was music or story-telling, sometimes, too, entertainments by actors, gymnasts, or professional clowns.

We may be permitted to doubt that Symphosius made up his verses *subito e conamine vocis*, as he says. More likely he had them all ready and " sprung " them on the other guests with a " that reminds me ", quite as a modern diner does his impromptu stories.

Riddle I *Graphium, The Stylus*, an iron or bronze instrument, very much the shape and size of a lead pencil, and used by the ancients for writing on wax tablets. It was made sharp at one end and flat or blunt at the other, to smooth over the wax. Hence *vertere stilum* means " to erase " and " to correct. "

Riddle II *Harundo, The Reed*, which grows by the side of pools. The flute was made of a single reed and Pan's Pipes of several reeds of different lengths fastened together with wax, as appears from a terra-cotta relief in the British Museum.

Riddle III *Anulus cum Gemma, The Signet Ring*. In the earliest times the ring was used, not as an ornament,

but as a seal. The custom of wearing rings was introduced from Asia into Greece and, probably, from Greece into Rome, although the original inventors of seal-engraving never wore the engraved stone in a ring, but (even down to the time of the Arabian conquest), as the ornament of a bracelet or necklace. At Rome, rings were first made of iron, though they were destined for the same purpose as in Greece, namely, to be used as seals, and every free Roman had the right to use such a ring. This iron ring was worn down to the end of the Republic by those who loved the simplicity of the good old times, and it retained its place in the ceremony of betrothal. Different families appear to have had distinct seals like our crests. Thus Galba's family seal represented a dog leaping from a ship; Pompey's bore the device of three trophies; Augustus sealed with a Sphinx, afterward with the head of Alexander the Great, and finally with his own portrait, as did Hadrian. The Emperor's ring was a kind of state-seal, the care of which was entrusted to a special officer. In Greece, as well as at Rome, rings came later to be used merely as ornaments, the rich loading their fingers with gems and even wearing different rings in winter and summer.

Riddle IV *Clavis, A Key.* The earliest mention of a key, like our own, which could be taken out of the lock is in the Book of Judges (III. 23, 25). Keys, both of copper and bronze, have been found in the Troad, as for instance, the very curious bronze key, with a ring for suspension, found in the ruins of Novum Ilium. It has the shape of the so-called quadrangular image of Hermes,



with an altar-like base, forming one piece with the body. At Rome, the street door was secured by bolts and a bar on the inside, but it also had a key, which was carried by the *ianitor*, suspended from his wrist. Within the house, doors were locked, often on both sides. When a Roman woman first entered her husband's house, he gave her his keys, except the key to the wine-cellar, and if she were divorced, she sent him back his keys. (*Claves remisit.*)

Riddle V *Catena, A Chain.* Under the Romans, prisoners were chained in the following manner: the soldier who was appointed to guard a particular captive had the chain fastened to the wrist of his left hand, the right remaining at liberty. The prisoner, on the contrary, had the chain fastened to the wrist of his right hand. Sometimes, for greater security, the prisoner was chained to two soldiers, one on each side. If he was declared innocent they broke or cut the chains asunder. Instead of the common materials, iron or bronze, Anthony, when he captured the King of the Armenians, paid him the pretended compliment of having him bound with chains of gold.

Riddle VI *Tegula, Roof-tiles.* These were made of baked clay and were originally flat, but afterwards made with a raised rim on each of their longer sides. The lowest row was usually finished with an ornamental moulding.

Riddle VII *Fumus, Smoke.*

Riddle VIII *Nebula, Fog.* Cynthia (line 3) was a name of Artemis, the Moon-goddess, from Mount Cynthus in the island of Delos, where she was born.

Riddle IX *Pluvia, Rain.* Water is drawn up by the

sun, in the form of vapour, from the bosom of the earth which first received it as rain.

Riddle X *Glacies, Ice.*

Riddle XI *Nix, Snow.*

Riddle XII *Flumen et Pisces, A River with Fish.*

Riddle XIII *Navis, A Ship.*

Riddle XIV *Pullus in Ovo, A Chicken in the Shell.*

The second line of this riddle, *Nondum natus eram, nec eram iam matris in alvo*, seems plain enough. It means simply that the egg had been laid but not yet hatched. Unfortunately, one of the best manuscripts reads here, *Nondum natus fueram, nec fueram matris donatus in alvo*. This will not scan and has been corrected to *Nondum natus, eram matris damnatus in alvo*. Poor little chicken! The subtleties of Theology began to trouble him very early.

Riddle XV *Vipera, The Viper.* Line 1. Pliny in his *Natural History* ( Bk. X. 82 ) is authority for the statement that the viper is the only snake that brings forth her young alive and that, in doing so, she dies. He says: *Terrestrium eadem sola intra se parit ova unius coloris et mollia ut pisces. Tertia die intra uterum catulos excludit: deinde singulos singulis diebus parit, viginti fere numero. Itaque ceterae tarditatis impatientes, perrumpunt latera, occisa parente.*

Riddle XVI *Tinea, The Bookworm.*

Riddle XVII *Aranea, A Spider.* Arachne was a Lydian maiden who was so proud of her weaving that she ventured to challenge Pallas Athena herself to a trial of skill. Arachne wove a piece of cloth on which the loves of the



gods were represented. As Athena could find no fault with the work, she tore it to pieces, and Arachne, in despair, hanged herself. Athena loosened the rope and saved her life, but changed the rope into a cobweb and Arachne herself into a spider. Symphosius adds a touch to the story by making Pallas to have been Arachne's teacher.

Riddle XVIII *Coclea, The Snail*. The snail gets all its wisdom from "heaven itself", *i.e.*, from the air, by means of its two little horns or tentacles. Aristotle calls the snail stupid, but Philemon, a laughter-loving Athenian of the third century B. C., says in one of his comedies:

The snail, methinks, is wondrous clever,  
Whene'er a neighbor harmful proves  
It grieves him not the tie to sever;  
He simply takes his house and moves.

Riddle XIX *Rana, The Frog*.

Riddle XX *Testudo, The Tortoise*. Hermes is said to have invented the lyre, at a very tender age, by stretching four strings across a tortoise-shell which he had found. In historic times a tortoise-shell was used as the sounding board of the lyre. The curved horns of a goat or pieces of wood of a similar shape were inserted in the openings for the front legs, and joined near the upper end by a transverse piece of wood, called the yoke. The strings (usually seven in number) ran from the yoke across a low bridge, fastened to the breast-plate of the shell, and were tied in knots and secured to the shell at the bottom. The lyre was ordinarily played with the left hand, while to produce louder and longer notes the strings were struck by the right hand with the *plectrum*, the

point of which was shaped like a leaf, or a heart, or sometimes like a little hammer.

Riddle XXI *Talpa, The Mole.*

Riddle XXII *Formica, The Ant.* The industry and patience of the ant have been so insisted upon that it is a comfort to find, both in Greek and Latin, a proverb which says, " Even the ant can be roused to anger."

Riddle XXIII *Musca, The Fly.* The fly has no reputation to lose. She is always *improba* and *vorata*, a symbol of the Paul Prys who buzz about where they are not wanted.

Riddle XXIV *Curculio, The Corn-worm.* Line 3: Ceres was the goddess of agriculture. She is the *Mater Dolorosa* of the Romans, who loses her daughter in the fall but regains her in the spring, when the wheat appears again from the ground.

Riddle XXV *Mus, The Mouse.* *Nomen Romae consul habebat* (line 3), refers to the celebrated consul Publius Decius Mus, who, after many glorious exploits, devoted himself to the Manes for the safety of his country, in a battle against the Latins, B. C. 337. Decius' words, according to Livy ( VIII. 9, 8 ) were, " In place of the Roman state, in place of the army, the legions, the allies of the Roman people, I devote the legions and allies of the enemy, with me, to the gods of death and to the grave ". His son and grandson are both said to have chosen the same heroic death.

Riddle XXVI *Grus, The Crane.* The crane is called " Palamedes' bird " because, according to one story, the flight of cranes suggested to Palamedes the idea of the letters of the alphabet. The letter which the crane describes as it flies is



Y, corresponding to the letter V. In Martial (*Epigrams*, IX, 13, 7) occurs the line, *Quod (nomen) pinna scribente grues ad sidera tollant*. The *nomen* referred to is *ver*, Spring, whose first letter the cranes write on the sky. *Bella cruenta* and *non longior hostis* suggest the bloody warfare of the Pygmies and cranes in the springtime. The story is first told by Homer (*Iliad*, III. 5) and repeated, with variations by numerous writers.

Riddle XXVII *Cornix, The Crow*. Hesiod (*Fragmenta* 163 G.) gives the crow nine lives. It was a bird of ill-omen except when seen on the left side.

Riddle XXVIII *Vespertilio, The Bat*. *Vespertilio* is from *vesper*, evening.

Riddle XXIX *Eriacus, The Hedgehog*.

Riddle XXX *Peduculus, The Louse*.

Riddle XXXI *Phoenix*. Herodotus, in his *History of Egypt* (Bk. II. 73) gives the following account of the phoenix, although he does not vouch for its truth: There is another sacred bird called the phoenix. I have not seen him, except in a picture, for he only comes, so the Heliopolitans say, once in five hundred years, upon the death of his father. If he is truly represented in the picture, his plumage is crimson and gold and he resembles the eagle in shape and size. This is what they say he does, although it seems incredible to me: He comes from Arabia, so they say, carrying the body of his father enclosed in myrrh, and buries him in the temple of the Sun. He does it in this wise: First, he moulds an egg of the myrrh as heavy as he is able to carry. He makes a trial of the weight by carrying it; then he hollows out the egg and

puts his father into it, and, with other myrrh, plasters over the hole he has made to put in his father, so that, his father lying within, the weight is the same as before. He then bears the whole to Egypt, to the temple of the Sun. This is the story they tell of the bird." Tacitus (*Annals* VI. 28) goes a step further back in the story. "When," he says, "the father bird feels that his years are almost accomplished, he builds a nest in the earth and from it the young bird arises. When he is grown, his first care is to bury his father." Tacitus then gives substantially the same account of the burial as Herodotus, but with less caution, for his concluding words are, "There is no doubt that this bird is seen now and again in Egypt."

Riddle XXXII *Taurus, The Bull*. The first line doubtless refers to Statilius Taurus, a distinguished general and life-long friend of Augustus, who made him Praefect of the City (B. C. 16) during his own absence from Rome, although at that time Taurus was well advanced in age. According to Suetonius, Augustus was a great sufferer from rheumatism (*lignea membra sequebar*) and his private life was far from blameless. It may be said, however, in extenuation of Augustus, that Suetonius' methods were very like those of a modern reporter. He would put down anything for a "story." Line 2. In its widest extent, the name Taurus was applied to the whole of the great mountain-chain which runs through Asia from west to east. In its usual significance, however, it denotes the mountain-chain in the south of Asia Minor. Line 3 refers to the constellation of the Zodiac.

Riddle XXXIII *Lupus, The Wolf*. Scarcely any other



animal was so hated and, at the same time, so much talked about, by the Romans. He has inspired a host of proverbs and stories. For instance, the Romans believed that if a wolf saw a man before the latter saw him, the man became dumb. It is a curious fact that this belief still prevails in many countries of Europe. In Spain, so the peasants hold, if a man says to a wolf: "Wolf, Wolf," he is stricken dumb. Then there are the Were-Wolf stories, the best of which is told by one of the guests at Trimalchio's dinner. The idea of the were-wolf, however, goes back to the time of Herodotus. He is a man changed into a wolf (*loup-garou*), either by his own power, when he becomes constitutional were-wolf, or by accident. The "good wolf" figures in the story of Romulus and Remus.

Riddle XXXIV *Vulpes, The Fox*. Reynard came into his own during the Middle Ages. He is the hero of the great fable-epic *Reineke Fuchs*, which was so popular during the Middle Ages and exercised so great an influence on the literatures of Western Europe. The story of *Reineke Fuchs* is that the Fox had given great offense to the Wolf and various other animals, who summon him before the court of justice held by the Lion. At first he refuses to come and cleverly rids himself of those sent after him. When, at length, he is compelled to appear, he pretends repentance and is pardoned by the Lion. But the offenses are repeated in a different form and again the Fox goes free. At last the Wolf, in despair, challenges him to a single combat. By his craft the Fox gains a complete victory and is recognized as the real master of the beasts.

Riddle XXXV *Capra, The She-Goat. Alma Jovis nutrix* was the goat Amalthea who cared for the new-born Zeus on the island of Crete. Line 3. The Romans loved to imitate by words the cries of different animals. Thus the story is told of the Emperor Geta that, "He had the habit of making his grammarians give the cry emitted by every animal, as : lambs *bleat*, pigs *grunt*, pigeons *coo*, swine *root*, bears *snort*, lions *roar*, leopards *snarl*, elephants *trumpet*, frogs *croak*, horses *whinny*, asses *bray*, bulls *bellow*, and, moreover, prove what they said *by examples from ancient writers.*" There is also a curious mediaeval poem, called *The Nightengale*, which gives the calls of nearly a hundred birds and beasts.

Riddle XXXVI *Porcus, The Pig.* Line 3. *Orcus* or *Hades* was the name of the god of the lower world.

Riddle XXXVII *Mula, The Mule.*

Riddle XXXVIII *Tigris, The Tiger. A fluvio dicor* (line 1) is the Tigris River of western Asia, so called from its rapidity, for the word *tigris* in Persian means "an arrow."

Riddle XXXIX *Centaurus, A Centaur.* The Centaurs were a Thessalian race fabled to have been half man and half horse. Their struggles with the Lapiths, another mythical race, is a favourite subject with Greek sculptors (for example, the metopes from the south side of the Parthenon, now in the British Museum). Chiron, the teacher of Achilles, was the most celebrated of the Centaurs.

Riddle XL *Papaver, The Poppy*, from the juice of which opium is made.



Riddle XLI *Malva, Mallows*. The Romans set great store by mallows for their medicinal properties; *salubres gravi corpori*, Horace says. They resembled the English vegetable-marrow.

Riddle XLII *Beta, The Beet*. Beta is the second letter of the Greek alphabet, so, as the beet says, she is "wholly Greek." In the second line, *praeque* is Baehren's suggestion for the meaningless *namque* of the manuscripts. Beets were a staple article of diet among the poor.

Riddle XLIII *Cucurbita, The Gourd*.

Riddle XLIV *Cepa, The Onion*. Like *cucurbila* (blockhead), *cepa* was often used as a term of reproach. Thus, one of the guests at Trimalchio's dinner calls a curly-headed slave boy a "frizzled onion."

Riddle XLV *Rosa, The Rose*. "Purple of earth" is a beautiful expression, as contrasted with *murex*, the purple of the sea.

Riddle XLVI *Viola, The Violet*.

Riddle XLVII *Tus, Frankincense*.

Riddle XLVIII *Murra, Myrrh*. Murra was the daughter of Cingras, King of Cyprus, who, for her sin, was changed into a myrrh-tree. Myrrh was used by the Romans to flavour their wine and also, in a perfumed oil, to anoint their hair at a banquet (line 3).

Riddle XLIX *Ebur, Ivory*. The "tooth" of the elephant was made into a great variety of beautiful and costly things. Indeed it was a synonym for wealth and splendour; so Horace speaks of a "gold and ivory ceiling" and Juvenal's plutocrat is alarmed for the safety of his amber,

his statues, his Phrygian marble, his ivory and his broad tortoise-shell.

Riddle L *Fenum, Hay.*

Riddle LI *Mola, A Mill.* Several hand-mills have been found in the bakers' shops at Pompeii, all of the same general construction. The base is a cylindrical stone of some five feet in diameter and one in height, out of which rises a conical projection two feet high, forming the nether millstone. This has an iron pivot at the top. The outer stone is shaped something like an hour-glass, with a socket in the centre of the narrowest part to receive the pivot. The lower half fitted like a cap over the nether millstone, while the grain was poured into the upper and ran gradually down through holes pierced in it to the solid cone beneath where it was ground to flour between the two surfaces of stone as the mill was turned round and round. The turning was done by slaves, with the aid of a wooden bar inserted in each side, for which a socket was provided. Larger mills of the same construction were turned by a mule, an ox or a horse. Such a one ( the cut on the title-page ) is represented in a drawing scratched on the Palatine walls at Rome, with the exhortation underneath, " Work away, little mule, as I have worked, and much good may it do you," possibly drawn by a slave who had been punished by being made to do a turn at the mill.

Riddle LII *Farina, Flour.*

Riddle LIII. *Vitis, A Vine.* The *torus* (banquet-couch), *thalamus* (bridal bed), and the grave were all decorated with vines by the Romans.



Riddle LIV *Amus, A Fish-hook.*

Riddle LV *Acula, A Needle.* Line 2. The " yielding chain " drawn along by the needle is, of course, the thread.

Riddle LVI *Caliga, A Boot,* worn by the common soldiers ; thus the great Commoner, Marius, was said to have risen to the consulship *a caliga*, i. e. from the ranks.

Riddle LVII *Clavus Caligarius, A Boot-Nail.*

Riddle LVIII *Capillus, A Hair.*

Riddle LIX *Pila, A Ball.* The Roman handball was made of leather and stuffed with hair. Their favourite game of ball was *trigon*, in which there were three players, standing in the form of an equilateral triangle. At the start, each player had a ball and he could send it to either of the others. Obviously the worst position for a player would be to receive three balls almost at the same time, and the best to receive only one ball at a time with a fair interval before the next. There were no " sides " but each played for his own score. The winner was probably the one who dropped a ball the fewest times. A fourth person stood by to count the misses.

Riddle LX *Serra, A Saw.*

Riddle LXI *Ancora, An Anchor.*

Riddle LXII *Pons, A Bridge.*

Riddle LXIII *Spongia, A Sponge.*

Riddle LXIV *Tridens, The Trident.* Neptune's sceptre, with which he calms the wind and the waves. (1.3.)

Riddle LXV *Sagitta, An Arrow.*

Riddle LXVI *Flagellus, A Scourge.* This was a horrible instrument made with a number of knotted and

twisted tails. Sometimes bones, heavy pieces of bronze or even hooks were knotted into the lash. It was chiefly used for the punishment of slaves, although during the *Saturnalia* it was put away under the master's seal. It was used, also, in the contests of gladiators and in the army, upon foreign soldiers, for it was unlawful to scourge a Roman citizen, at least without an appeal to Caesar. Tacitus speaks of a very unpopular centurion who got the nickname of Old-Give-Him-Another from his frequent use of the lash.

Riddle LXVII *Lanterna, A Lantern.* Two bronze lanterns have been found in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii. They are cylindrical in form. At the bottom is a circular piece of metal resting on three balls. Within is a bronze lamp, attached to the centre of the base and provided with an extinguisher. Plates of translucent horn form the sides, probably with no opening, but the hemispherical cover may be so raised as to serve for a door and it is also perforated with holes through which the smoke might escape. Two upright pillars support the frame-work and from them two chains extend to the handle by which the lantern was carried.

Riddle LXVIII *Vitreum, Glass.* That the Romans used glass for windows is proved by the discovery at Pompeii, not only of many pieces of flat glass but also, in the warm-room of the public baths, of a bronze lattice with some of the panes still inserted in the frame.

Riddle LXIX *Speculum, A Mirror.* The mirrors of the ancients were generally of polished metal, though glass mirrors with a thick backing of metal were not unknown.



They are round or oval for the most part, often with an ornamental handle and engraved back.

Riddle LXX *Clepsydra, A Water-clock*. This was a hollow globe, usually of glass, with a short neck at the top, like that of a bottle, into which the water was poured, and several little openings at the bottom out of which it escaped. They were used in law courts—both Greek and Roman—to regulate the time of the speeches. The amount of "water" allowed to a speaker depended on the importance of the case. The running of the water was stopped when documents were read or witnesses examined.

Riddle LXXI *Puteus, A Well*.

Riddle LXXII *Tubus Ligneus, A Wooden Pipe*.

Riddle LXXIII *Uter, A Wine-Skin*. This was a bag made of skin—that of the ox, pig, or goat—carefully stitched at the sides, and made tight with pitch or wax. It was chiefly used in carrying wine from place to place.

Riddle LXXIV *Lapis, A Stone*. According to Roman tradition, Jupiter overwhelmed the earth with a deluge, from which only Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha were saved. At length their boat rested on the summit of Mount Parnassus, and, the waters subsiding, they consulted the ancient oracle of Themis in regard to the restoration of mankind. The oracle said, "Depart from the temple and with veiled heads and loosened girdles, cast behind you the bones of your mother." At first they were horrified, then the idea occurred to Deucalion that the oracle must mean the stones which are the bones of Earth, the great mother of all. They therefore obeyed the command and the stones cast by Deucalion

softened into men and those cast by Pyrrha into women. But Pyrrha looked back and was herself turned into stone. Line 3. *Lapis* becomes *apis*, a bee, if the first letter is taken away.

Riddle LXXV *Calx, Lime.*

Riddle LXXVI *Silex, Flint.*

Riddle LXXVII *Rotae, Wheels.*

Riddle LXXVIII *Scalae, A Flight of Steps.*

Riddle LXXIX *Scopa, A Broom*; made of twigs or branches bound together, sometimes of palm-leaves. After each course, at a dinner, the table and floor were swept with a broom.

Riddle LXXX *Tintinnabulum, A Bell.*

Riddle LXXXI *Laguna, An Earthenware Jar.* *Tellus* is the goddess of Earth and *Prometheus* is put for fire because of the legend that he stole fire from heaven in a hollow reed, when Jupiter in his anger had denied it to mankind, and so brought it down to earth.

Riddle LXXXII *Conditum, Spiced Wine.*

Riddle LXXXIII *Vinum in Acetum Conversum, Wine Turned to Vinegar.*

Riddle LXXXIV *Malum, An Apple.* At the wedding of *Peleus* and *Thetis*, so the story runs, the goddess of Discord, who was not invited, threw a golden apple among the guests, with the inscription: "For the fairest." *Juno*, *Venus* and *Minerva*, each claimed that it belonged to her and as *Zeus* was unwilling to decide, he commanded *Hermes* to take the rival beauties to Mount *Ida* and entrust the decision to *Paris*, whose judgment was to be final. *Juno*



promised him a kingdom to decide for her, Minerva, wisdom and renown in war, Venus, the most beautiful woman in the world for his wife. Paris gave the apple to Venus, thus incurring the resentment of the other two. Later Paris, now acknowledged as Priam's son, was sent on a mission to Greece, and carried off Helen, the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta. The result was the Trojan War which ended in the destruction of Troy and all Priam's race. The "sister-band" were the Maidens of the West (the Hesperides), in whose gardens grew the golden apples presented by Earth to Juno as a wedding present. They were guarded by a hundred-headed monster whom Hercules slew.

Riddle LXXXV *Perna, Ham.* Marcus Porcius Cato, who made the Porcian family a "noble race," is meant.

Riddle LXXXVI *Malleus, A Hammer.*

Riddle LXXXVII *Pistillus, A Pestle.*

Riddle LXXXVIII *Strigilis Aenea, A Bronze Strigil.* After a warm bath, the Romans, and the Greeks as well, had themselves scraped down with a strigil, much as we would scrape a horse. The edge of the strigil was softened by having drops of oil poured upon it; nevertheless Augustus is said to have suffered from its violent use and invalids and persons of delicate habit employed sponges instead.

Riddle LXXXIX *Balneum, A Bath.* The Romans may be said to have been addicted to bathing. The regular hour for the bath was just before dinner, but some of the later emperors bathed six or seven times a day in summer

and twice or three times in winter. Commodus even took his meals in the bath. While there were bath-rooms in the more elaborate private houses, most of the people used the public baths. These were very numerous and served many of the purposes of a club. The baths at Pompeii are so well preserved that in some of the chambers even the ceilings are intact. There are, besides a large waiting-room with benches of stone along the sides, and another room where the bathers removed their clothing—incidentally, it was often stolen—the *frigidarium*, or cold bath, the *tepidarium*, where there was no water, but only warm air, and finally the *caldarium*, or hot bath. There are also women's apartments, of the same character as the men's, but much smaller.

Riddle XC *Tessera, A Die*. They were made of ivory, bone, or some close-grained wood and numbered on all six sides like modern dice. Three *tesserae* were used in gambling, so that the highest throw was three sixes, called the "Venus-throw", and the lowest, three aces, the "Dog's throw". We hear of a number of laws against gambling, but they were probably not very strictly enforced, for the Emperor Claudius wrote a book on the subject—a sort of ancient Hoyle—and Suetonius quotes a popular jibe at Augustus, which runs,

After he had lost his vessels twice  
Caesar sought to triumph with the dice.

Riddle XCI *Pecunia, Money*.

Riddle XCII *Mulier quae Geminos Pariebat, The Mother of Twins*.

Riddle XCIII *Miles Podager, A Gouty Soldier*.



Riddle XCIV *Luscus Allium Vendens, A one-eyed Pedlar of Garlic.* One-eyed people seem to have a very general reputation for thieving. Martial (*Epigrams* VIII. 59) tells of a "*luscus*" who, if he could not find anything else to steal, took the slippers from beside a fellow-slave's bed while he was asleep.

Riddle XCV *Funambulus, A Rope-dancer.* The art of dancing on the tight-rope was carried to great perfection by the Romans, if we may judge from a series of paintings discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum. The emperor Marcus Aurelius caused feather-beds to be laid under the rope because of the death of a favourite dancer. One of the most difficult feats was running down the rope at the end of the performance.

Riddle XCVI is missing in most of the manuscripts; one of them, however, has the following in this place, probably inserted during the Middle Ages:

*De VIII ut Tollat VII et Remanent VI.*

*Nunc mihi iam credas fieri quod posse negatur.  
Octo tenens manibus, sed me monstrante magistro  
Sublatis septem reliqui tibi sex remanebunt.*

To Take VII from VIII and Have VI Left.

If you this marvel to believe will deign  
Hold eight upon your hands—I'll make it plain—  
Take seven away, and yet will six remain.

Professor Gesner, quoted by Reise, offers the following solution: Hold up one hand, and you will see that the thumb and forefinger form the numeral V, while the other three fingers give the III. Now cover up the thumb and forefinger with the other hand, and you have taken away two

and the V, which is seven. Then spread the third and fourth fingers apart and behold, VI remain! He adds: *Si quid novisti rectius, candidus imperti*, in other words, "If you know anything better, make no bones of telling it."

Riddle XCVII *Umbra, A Shadow.*

Riddle XCVIII *Echo.* In Roman mythology, Echo was the daughter of Air and Earth. She was once one of Juno's attendants, but offended the goddess by her untruthfulness, so that, as a punishment, Juno took away the use of her tongue, except to repeat what she heard. She might still have done considerable mischief, we may be allowed to think, but she fell in love with the beautiful youth Narcissus, and, her love not being returned, she pined away till there was nothing left of her but bones and voice. The bones have been turned into stone, but the voice remains.

Riddle XCIX *Somnus, Sleep.*

Riddle C *Monumentum, A Tombstone.*

Symphosius set the fashion of writing just a hundred riddles. It has been followed, not only in the Middle Ages, but by modern riddle-makers as well; for instance, by Mr. Edward Bellamy in his *Century of Charades*. A very clever friend of the present writer, who is devoted to riddles, says that she is glad Symphosius did not take her out to dinner, because time, silence and one company, all together, are needed to enjoy them properly. A number of Symphosius' *Riddles* require special knowledge with us, though not, of course, with his own hearers. This special knowledge it is



the object of these *Notes* to supply. Many of his riddles, however — and they are the best — need no comment, for they concern things which do not change.

Most of us, unfortunately, regard Latin as a "grind" from the days of *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres* until the longed-for college diploma is in our hands. With the possible exception of Horace, the Romans seem like a shadowy background for the partitive genitive and the dactylic hexameter. Very few have a personal liking for Lucretius or Tacitus, or would dream of saying, as M. Nisard does about an argument between Caesar and his soldiers, "If I had been there, I should have done so and so." But the Romans were immensely like ourselves, on the social as well as the political side, and if anyone doubts it let him read the account in the *Annals* of Tacitus of a debate on the question of Woman's Rights, held in the Roman Senate in the year 21 A. D. This little book on the *Riddles* of Symphosius, slight as it is, may help to make the Romans seem more human—that is the "moral"—and perhaps, too, may afford amusement during some idle hour.











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